

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1 1. A data input device comprising:
2 a first plurality of keys disposed within a first portion of a housing on a first side,
3 such that when a user's thumb is placed on a second side, the user's remaining fingers can be
4 placed on one or more of the first plurality of keys, the first plurality of keys to provide
5 alphanumeric character input; and
6 a second plurality of keys disposed within a second portion of the housing on the first
7 side and substantially aligned with the first plurality of keys, the second plurality of keys to
8 provide control functionality.

1 2. The data input device of claim 1 wherein the first plurality of keys provide
2 input of a first set of alphanumeric characters in response to a single keystroke and input of a
3 second set of alphanumeric characters in response to multiple keystrokes.

1 3. The data input device of claim 2 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "e", "t", "a", "o", and "h".

1 4. The data input device of claim 2 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "n", "i", "s", and "r".

1 5. The data input device of claim 2 wherein the second set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "m", "p", "d", and "b".

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1 6. The data input device of claim 2 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters further comprises "shift" and "number lock" keys.

1 7. The data input device of claim 2 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters is selected based on frequency of use of the corresponding characters.

1 8. The data input device of claim 1 wherein the second plurality of keys is
2 substantially vertically aligned with the first plurality of keys.

1 9. The data input device of claim 8 wherein a switching mechanism alters the
2 key configuration of the first and second plurality of keys such that keystrokes in the altered
3 configuration produce different alphanumeric input than similar keystrokes in the pre-altered
4 configuration.

1 10. The data input device of claim 9 wherein the key configuration in the altered
2 configuration is a mirror-image of the pre-altered configuration.

1 11. The data input device of claim 1 wherein the second plurality of keys is
2 substantially horizontally aligned with the first plurality of keys.

1 12. The data input device of claim 1 wherein the housing is generally egg-shaped.

1 13. The data input device of claim 1 further comprising a wireless transmitter to
2 transmit keystroke information to another electronic system capable of receiving
3 alphanumeric input.

1 14. An apparatus comprising:
2 a first plurality of keys disposed within a first portion of a housing on a distal side, the
3 first plurality of keys to provide alphanumeric character input;
4 a second plurality of keys disposed within a second portion of the housing on the
5 distal side and substantially vertically aligned with the first plurality of keys, the second
6 plurality of keys to provide control functionality, including cursor control;
7 one or more securing devices on a proximal side, such that one or more of a user's
8 thumbs is secured to the apparatus, and the user's remaining fingers are placed on the distal
9 side, the remaining fingers to operate the pluralities of keys; and
10 a connecting mechanism to attach the first portion of the housing with the second
11 portion of the housing, the mechanism to provide horizontal rotary motion between the first
12 and second portions of the housing.

1 15. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising an antenna protruding from an
2 upper portion of the first portion of the housing, the antenna to provide electromechanical
3 coupling with another electronic device.

1 16. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a slot extending into the housing
2 on a lateral edge of the second portion of the housing, the slot to receive a removable
3 memory device.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising one or more connectors on one
2 or more of a lateral and a bottom edge of the housing to receive a cable connection to provide
3 electrical coupling with another electronic device.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a display device on an upper
2 portion of the proximal side of the housing to provide a visual user interface.

1 19. A wireless communication device comprising a set of keys, the set of keys
2 configured to operate as a distal, chording, alphanumeric keyboard.

1 20. A portable device capable of receiving alphanumeric input, the portable
2 device comprising a set of keys configured to operate as a distal, chording, alphanumeric
3 keyboard to provide alphanumeric input to the device.

1 21. A data input device comprising:
2 a first plurality of keys disposed within a first side of a first housing, such that when a
3 thumb of a first hand of a user is placed on a second side, the user's remaining fingers can be
4 placed on one or more of the first plurality of keys, the first plurality of keys to provide
5 alphanumeric character input; and

6 a second plurality of keys disposed within a first side of a second housing, such that
7 when a thumb of a second hand of a user is placed on a second side, the user's remaining
8 fingers can be placed on one or more of the second plurality of keys, the second plurality of
9 keys to provide control functionality.

1 22. The data input device of claim 21 wherein the first plurality of keys provide
2 input of a first set of alphanumeric characters in response to a single keystroke and input of a
3 second set of alphanumeric characters in response to multiple keystrokes.

1 23. The data input device of claim 22 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "e", "t", "a", "o", and "h".

1 24. The data input device of claim 22 wherein the first set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "n", "i", "s", and "r".

1 25. The data input device of claim 22 wherein the second set of alphanumeric
2 characters comprises "m", "p", "d", and "b".

1 26. The data input device of claim 21 further comprising a wireless transmitter to
2 transmit keystroke information to another electronic system capable of receiving
3 alphanumeric input.